



Outdoor Learning and Forest School Policy



Date:	
Review date:	
Signed (Chair of Governors):	

The School is committed to ensuring that all pupils have the opportunity to take part in Outdoor Learning experiences.

Legislation

We aim to and are committed to providing a secure environment in which pupils can flourish and in which all contributions are valued.

Minera VA School undertakes to comply with its legal obligations as set out below:

- Race Relations Act 1976
- Race Relations Amendment Act 2000
- Sex Discrimination Act 1986
- Childrens' Act 1989
- Special Educational Needs and Disability Act 2001
- Equalities Act 2010.

Definition of Forest School

Forest School is a pupil-centred inspirational learning process that offers opportunities for holistic growth. It supports play, exploration and supported risk taking. It can help to develop confidence and self-esteem through learner inspired, hands-on experiences in a natural setting.

Forest School has a developmental ethos shared by thousands of trained practitioners around the world, who are constantly developing their learning styles and skills to support new and imaginative learners. Forest School originates in Scandinavia which first arrived in the UK in 1993 and has grown since then.

Aims

We aim to give pupils and practitioners a shared understanding of the ethos of a Forest School and Outdoor Learning experiences.

As a school we aim to provide the pupils with the skills for life-long learning, to be independent, self-motivated and considerate. Forest School particularly supports the development of self-esteem and self-confidence. Through Outdoor Learning and Forest School activities we aim to provide a stimulating learning environment to cater for the variety of learning styles and needs (visual, auditory and kinetic).

Environmental Considerations

Forest School has environmental awareness at the heart of its ethos.

We aim to ensure that;

- wherever possible environmentally friendly products and recyclable materials should be used.
- good practice should be modelled by adults to pupils to foster and encourage an understanding that we need to care and look after the World in which we live.
- damage to fauna and flora is limited.

Health and Safety Consideration

Forest School and Outdoor Learning activities will support pupils of all ages to begin to and develop responsibility for themselves and others. We hope to encourage and develop risk management strategies that will promote pupils to consider the impact of their actions on themselves and on others.

Outdoor Learning and Forest School activities will act in line with the schools Health and Safety Policy.

Risk Assessment

In line with the Health and Safety Executives guidelines, Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations (1999), the LEA and the schools Risk Assessment and Health and Safety policies the following steps are to be followed:

- a full risk assessment of the site to identify hazards
- decide who could be harmed and how
- having spotted the hazards, then evaluate the risks and decide on a course of action
- review the risk assessment and update if necessary

The risk assessment is a working document which may be subject to change for example unforeseen or extreme weather.

Tool Use Procedure

Tools should be kept in a secure bag which is clearly labelled with the bags contents. When introducing tools to the pupils we highlight the follow teaching points;

- name of the tool
- Annotate the use
- Check safety
- Handling safely
- Purpose of the tool
- Use of the tool
- When finished, how to store the tool safely

We will;

- ensure that the pupils using the tools are supervised appropriately to their age
- ensure that the pupils are wearing the appropriate personal protective equipment for example a glove on the working hand

- allow the pupils the opportunity to take the appropriate risks
- ensure safe use of the tools, that they are used in a designated and agreed area of the site
- appropriate tool has been selected for the task

Cooking and Eating Procedure

Before pupils and adults eat or cook they must ensure that they have washed their hands. We ensure that all adults are aware of any food allergies and / or intolerances.

When cooking around the fire we must ensure the following;

- all food is properly cooked
- check food is not too hot prior to eating
- food is stored correctly, for example in a cool bag, in sealed containers, in the shade
- that left-overs are removed from the site
- fire rules are adhered too
- water, fire blanket and emergency bag are on hand in case of burns
- safe and appropriate number of pupils cooking at once – dependant on what is being cooked
- appropriate cooking equipment and protective clothing is worn

Evaluation & Review

This policy will be reviewed by the Senior Management Team and Governing Body and adopted by the Governing Body as per the schedule on the front page.